

**Bismarck, North Dakota**

## **FOR IMMEDIATE Release**

Jane F. Grant (800) 582-7584  
Public Information Coordinator  
[jane.grant@nd.usda.gov](mailto:jane.grant@nd.usda.gov)

### **RENVILLE COUNTY SIGNS AGREEMENT AS A CHAMPION COMMUNITY**

MOHALL, August 9, 2002. . . U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Rural Development North Dakota State Director Clare Carlson, Rural Development Community Programs Director William Davis and leaders from Renville County Jobs Development Authority (JDA) are gathered in Mohall today to sign a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) creating Renville County as a USDA Champion Community in North Dakota.

"Renville County JDA has become North Dakota's fourth designation as a Champion Community and was a round II applicant for Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Community status," said Clare Carlson. "This ceremony marks a milestone--the signing of this Memorandum of Agreement, for a Champion Community, with USDA Rural Development. This is a special recognition on the part of Rural Development that the citizens of Renville County have prepared an excellent strategic plan which should provide real opportunities for community growth and revitalization "

As a USDA Champion Community, Renville County JDA will have the opportunity to improve the economic viability, diversity and competitiveness of the local economy and its participation in the State, national and global markets. A Champion Community also creates an environment for communities to find strategies to solve their own problems and gain sustainable development.

USDA Rural Development will work with the Champion community to provide support, guidance and technical assistance in its strategic planning and implementation efforts.

The Community Development Staff of Rural Development will be responsive to local needs and encourage flexibility and innovation, process improvement, the removal of program impediments, and coordination of Federal, State and local resources.

"Renville County JDA is the first among several other North Dakota communities that will be designated as Champion Communities in the next few months," continued Carlson. "There are over 126 Champion Communities nation wide."

USDA Rural Development serves as the lead federal entity for rural development needs, and administers program assistance through three agencies: Rural Housing Service, Rural Business-Cooperative Service, and Rural Utilities Service. Further information on USDA Rural Development can be obtained by contacting any USDA Service Center or by visiting USDA's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>.

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